

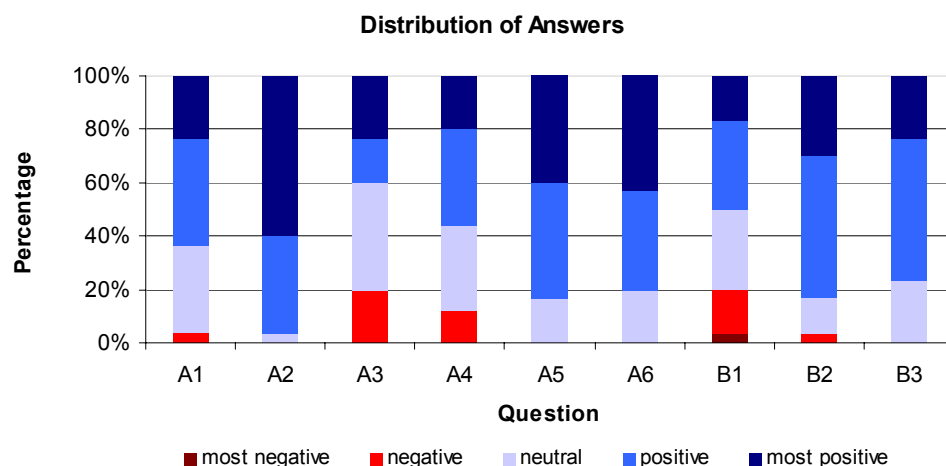
## Evaluation of the 1st International Student Symposium for Computational Biology

On Wednesday, September 28, immediately preceding ECCB 2005 in Madrid the ISCB Student Council held its first international Student Symposium. The symposium was targeted to young computational biology researchers who are keen to develop their research communication skills, want to meet like minded colleagues, network with accomplished scientists and learn about career opportunities available in Europe and globally.

The Student Council evaluated the success of the Student Symposium by means of a questionnaire that was handed out to the more than 100 attendees, out of which 30 returned their questionnaire. The following evaluation is based on those 30 questionnaires.

The majority of the attendees of the Student Symposium were graduate students, but there were also senior researchers, post docs and undergraduate students in the audience.

Attendees were asked to rate various aspects of the Student Symposium and its organization on a five step scale ranging from very negative to very positive. Overall evaluation of the questionnaires showed that no part of the symposium was experienced in a negative way. Both scientific and social activities were found to be well to very well organized and run by more than 80% of the audience. Almost 90% of the attendees were particularly pleased about opportunities to network with students and to present their work and ideas, however only 30% were satisfied with the opportunities to network with senior researchers. Figure 1 shows the distribution of answers to the questions concerning organization and usefulness of the Student Symposium.



*Figure 1.* Distribution of answers. Key to questions: A1 Quality and selection of presentations; A2 Location; A3 Visibility; A4 Social Activities; A5 Overall organization; A6 Overall usefulness; B1 Usefulness for own research; B2 Usefulness for communicating science in general; B3 Usefulness for networking.

Several of the students that were present stated on their questionnaires that their experiences at the Student Symposium encourage them to join the ISCB and the Student Council and to become involved in the organization of future Student Council events.

The Student Council leadership is extremely satisfied with the outcome of the Student Symposium. All goals were accomplished and planning is already under way to adapt the activities even better to the needs of the student community.

In order to stimulate the exchange of ideas and criticism, the next Student Symposium is going to feature more time for discussions after the talks and is likely to have a poster session, which was also requested by many attendees. A poster session will also provide additional networking opportunities. Further, the Student Council is exploring ways to integrate more senior researchers and faculty members into the Student Symposium, which would give students better access to those members of the computational biology community.

For the ISCB Student Council Marketing Committee  
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